WebBuyer

SITE REVIEWS

SITE REVIEWS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

BY KEVIN SAVETZ

CONTENTS

PC Shopping 155
Wireless Resources.....157
E-Books.....158
PC Direct Vendors 159
PC Resources.....160
Software Sites.....161
Travel Sites 161
Online Banking Sites.....166

PC SHOPPING

The sites in this listing sell computers, components, and accessories from multiple manufacturers. See the sites under "PC Direct Vendors," or check the *Computer Shopper* Source Directory ***(cgi.zdnet.com/slink?8145)*** for more information on PC manufacturers offering only their own brands (such as Dell and Gateway).

aberdeeninc.com

Targeting the savvy consumer who craves speeds and feeds, **Aberdeen** offers extensive specs on a wide variety of computers and accessories. Shoppers can see side-by-side comparisons of motherboards the company carries.

Access Micro

accessmicro.com

Need a gift for that special someone who has everything? Check out ***Access Micro,*** which stocks tons of items ranging from T1 routers to complete desktop systems. The help desk and hardware guide provide aid to first-time visitors, and the new clearance area offers returned items and old inventory for below wholesale cost.

www.applied-computer.com

Selling PCs and supplies since 1984, **Applied Computer** promises to beat any advertised price. The company features a mind-blowing 800,000-product inventory—check the site's list of the 1,000 most popular ones. Beware of the handling fee tacked onto orders under $200.

blackbox.com

Get connected! Specializing in network products, **Black Box's** extensive 900-page catalog of storage, cabling, and surge-protection products—plus other connectivity accessories—can be viewed online or off.

buy.com

Among the products offered on this monstrous, multifaceted site are computers, electronics, books, and movies. **Buy.com** sells a whopping 850,000 items and offers a price-matching policy on most of them.

cdw.com

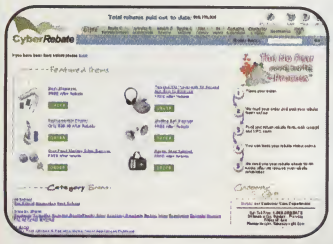
CDW offers an enormous array of hardware and software. Create side-by-side comparisons in many product categories, and search out dollar-saving deals on the rebates-and-coupons page.

COMPUTER SHOPPER site OF THE month — APRIL

cyberrebate.com

At **CyberRebate** you'll find more than 3,000 products that come with a 100 percent rebate, plus thousands more that offer partial rebates. The site's diverse catalog includes computer hardware, electronics, health and beauty items, jewelry, and toys.

You'll definitely want to take advantage of the rebates on anything you purchase at this site because most of the inventory is grossly overpriced without the refund. For instance, $130 for 25 CD-RW discs is costly, but with a 100 percent rebate it becomes a very attractive offer. Frequent free-shipping specials sweeten the deal even further.



Note that you'll need to be organized, diligent, and patient when shopping CyberRebate. The rebate process takes time and effort, and though the orders may arrive quickly, the rebates will not. In other words, you'll get the credit-card bill before the rebate check arrives.

To claim your refund, you'll have to download and print a page or two of forms, fill them out, clip the UPC from the product box, and snail-mail the bundle back to the company. The site estimates it takes 10 to 14 weeks to receive the rebate; in our tests, checks arrived 14 and 15 weeks after we sent the forms.

CyberRebate backs each product with a 30-day no-questions-asked return policy. A helpful customer-service area displays the status of your order and rebate.

RECENT WINNERS

MARCH

CD Post ..... *www.cdpost.com*

FEBRUARY

Gómez.com ..... *www.gomez.com*

compgeeks.com

Revenge of the nerds, indeed! Shop the **Computer Geeks Discount Outlet** for discontinued and refurbished computer gear. It's a trove for the do-it-yourselfer piecing together a desktop system. The site features low prices and complete specs on every product.

compuplus.com

Comp-U-Plus offers top-of-the-line customer service, including a 30-day money-back guarantee and free technical support. Its catalog isn't earth-shattering in scope, but plenty of name brands are represented, and prices are reasonable.

compusa.com

The well-organized **CompUSA** rounds out the usual selection of PC hardware, peripherals, and accessories with areas devoted to electronics and gadgets. The frugal won't want to overlook the site's clearance section.

www.computergate.com

In business since 1991, **Computer Gate** offers a 30-day satisfaction return policy on its products, which include peripherals and built-to-order PCs. Check out the Quick Index: You'll never have to poke around for the right product again.

computers4sure.com

The 17 well-stocked departments at **Computers4Sure.com** include networking equipment, peripherals, PDAs, scanners, and more. Bargain hunters can quickly sniff out deals on the Special Offers and Clearance pages.

computershopper.com

Computer Shopper's own piece of *cyberspace provides access to product* reviews, interactive guides to choosing a desktop or a notebook, and How to Buy sections for the most popular product categories.

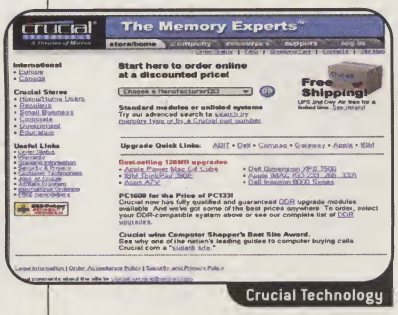
SITE REVIEWS

www.computersurplusoutlet.com

You're just crazy enough to build your own desktop system, aren't you? Then you'll feel right at home at **Computer Surplus Outlet,** where you'll find closeouts, overstocks, refurbished equipment, and liquidation items. You can even stumble upon the occasional assembly-required Pentium system for less than $100.

crucial.com

One of the largest providers of memory upgrades on the Web, **Crucial Technology** offers nearly 50,000 upgrade options for 10,000 computer systems. The site's Memory Selector helps buyers find the right product, and the company backs its memory with a lifetime warranty.



Crucial Technology

cyberwarehouse.com

If you can't pass up a bargain-basement sale (and don't mind waiting a few days for your item to ship), **CyberWarehouse** is definitely for you. The site offers a small selection of PCs, monitors, and other peripherals.

dalco.com

Dalco Electronics stocks everything from motherboards to monitors, ships them the day you order, and includes a 30-day guarantee. Bargain hunters will want to start with the specials found on the home page, which change regularly.

dartek.com

With a roster of more than 100,000 products, **Dartek** peddles an impressive selection of hardware, software, networking equipment, and office furniture. Well-designed features include printable spec sheets, customers' product ratings, a product-watch feature, and a frequent-buyers' club.

dirtcheapdrives.com

If you can store data on it, this site sells it. **Dirt Cheap Drives** offers hard drives, CD-ROM and DVD hardware, and drive arrays, with detailed technical information about each product. This decade-old company also stocks mounting kits, media, and accessories.

ecost.com

The **eCost.com** catalog spans the full range of PC hardware and software, including ready-to-use systems, peripherals, accessories, and applications.

The site features personalized product recommendations and fastidious organization.

egghead.com

Egghead.com shoppers can browse the site's hardware, software, office-product, and electronics superstores. Corporate users will find volume pricing, leasing information, and software licensing in the business center.

www.electrified.com

Need a serious bargain? **Electrified Discounters** specializes in products that are discontinued, second-inventory, refurbished, off-lease, or otherwise past their prime. Systems range from new Pentium II laptops to under-$200 used 486s. (Wear your sunglasses, however—this site is so garish it can be difficult to navigate.)

elinux.com

At **eLinux** you'll find 42,000 hardware and software products for users of the Linux operating system. The site is so serious about Linux, many of its desktop and notebook systems don't come bundled with that "other" OS. Features include Linux news and a community forum.

www.firstsource.com

Focused on the technology needs of businesses, **Firstsource** offers a broad range of choices in computer hardware, rack-mount systems, network tools, phone systems, wiring, and software. Real-time online customer service is available.

globalcomputer.com

Global Computer Supplies features same-day shipping on a Godzilla-size selection of PC components, accessories, software, furniture, and media. "Showrooms" highlight products from featured manufacturers. Watch out for the 15 percent restocking fee on nondefective returns, though.

gogocity.com

You'd think **GoGoCity.com** would be the one-stop-shop for knee-high boots, hot pants, and all things "gogo." Not so fast, slick. This site actually features desktop and notebook computers, peripherals, software, and accessories. The strangely diverse product categories also include children's items and interior-decoration products.

insight.com

With more than 100,000 items for sale, **Insight** offers an impressive catalog of hardware and software. Sign up for one or more of the 100 free newsletters featuring bulletins on new products, closeout specials, and tech news. Customized sites are available for shoppers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

J&R Computer World

www.jandr.com

Hardware, software, home-office products, and appliances abound at **J&R Computer World,** the New York City-based superstore famed for its selection and, ahem, "brusque" service. Avoid the attitude with this online version, which specializes in cameras—both digital and traditional film models. Product help is available via e-mail, online chat, and phone.

laptoptravel.com

Laptop Travel is road-warrior heaven! The site sells portable-computing and international-travel gear, including electrical adapters, modem converters/couplers, and security accessories. You'll find traditional and "camouflaged" laptop carrying cases, laptop RAM, and storage add-ons.

thelinuxstore.com

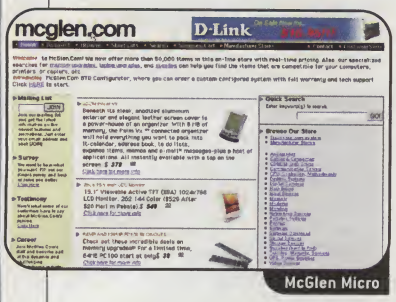
TheLinuxStore offers a small selection of "penguin-powered" hardware and software that's compatible with the popular alternative operating system. The community area offers Linux news, free downloads, and Web links.

TheLinuxStore

SITE REVIEWS

mcglen.com

McGlen Micro's specialized searches can help you find memory and other accessories compatible with your computer, printer, or copier. With the Build-To-Order Configurator, shoppers can design a custom system, which the company will configure and ship to you in two days.



McGlen Micro

mediasourceinc.com

Media Source is obsessed with storage media. This single-minded site sells CD-Rs, bulk floppies, optical discs, Zip disks, Jaz disks, DATs, and tons more. The selection of writable CDs includes brand-name and generic disks, business-card CD-Rs, and printable media.

megahaus.com

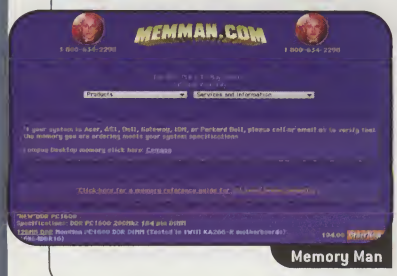
MegaHaus bills itself the "drive authority," offering a wide variety of storage solutions, including hard drives, DVD drives, RAID arrays, and CD-mastering products. A tech-info area features FAQs and specifications on hardware ranging from DVD players to drive brackets.

mei-microcenter.com

MEI-Micro Center offers new and refurbished desktops from Compaq, eMachines, Hewlett-Packard, and PowerSpec. You'll also find a small selection of peripherals. Rummage through the bargain bin for deals on closeouts, refurbished units, and overstocks.

memman.com

All of the desktop and laptop memory sold at **Memory Man** carries a lifetime warranty, and the site's reference guide offers RAM-configuration info for all name-brand computers. The site also sells processors, motherboards, hard drives, heat sinks, and more for intrepid system builders.



Memory Man

memory4less.com

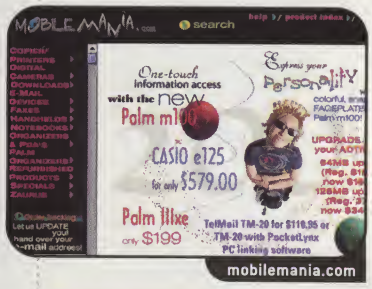
Memory4Less.com offers low prices on a wide variety of RAM, including older types you may have been pulling your hair out to find. If you don't know the memory requirements of your computer or digital camera, this site will clue you in.

microx-press.com

MicroX-Press offers detailed information about most products, as well as a handy feature that will send you an e-mail whenever a product's price drops below a limit you set. Customers are invited to rate and review products they've tried.

www.mobile-mania.com

Don't freak out, kids! Cut back on the sugar intake, and head over to **mobilemania.com,** where digital cameras, e-mail devices, PDAs, cases, and adapters of all sorts are available for folks on the go.



mobilemania.com

mobileplanet.com

MobilePlanet is home to a gaggle of high-tech tools and toys for mobile professionals. The selection includes handheld and notebook computers, PDAs, wireless-communication products, and travel-size printers and scanners. Rotating 3D images offer views of many products' least flattering sides.

motherboards.com

With a wide selection of motherboards from 10 manufacturers, do-it-yourselfers can handpick the perfect innards for their new PCs at **Motherboards.com.** Customers can post product reviews, dinging those models that just don't live up to the hype.

www.mwave.com

In addition to PC systems and peripherals, **Multiwave Direct** stocks notebook accessories, videoconferencing equipment, and network tools. Top sellers, "blowout specials," and rebate forms are a click away from the home page.

neutronet.com

Neutron carries thousands of computer systems and peripherals from nearly 400 manufacturers and distributors. A handy toolbox offers easy access to best buys, help for first-time buyers, and a massive manufacturer directory.

notebooksuperstore.com

Devoted exclusively to portable computers, **NotebookSuperStore.com** sells more than 50 different laptop models from nine manufacturers. You'll see technical details about each model, and a comparison tool helps you zero in on the best portable for your needs.

onvia.com

Onvia.com, a business-to-business computer outlet, offers a handful of features that distinguish it as a small-business resource, including a

WIRELESS RESOURCES

cellmania.com

Shopping for wireless gear can be tangle-free. **Cellmania** has lots of advice on purchasing wireless products and services, and provides a directory of mobile-enabled Internet sites. You can even access the site from your WAP-compatible phone.

decide.com

Did you ever have to make up your mind? **Decide.com** can help, offering comparisons of cellular phones and services, long-distance plans, and calling cards. Get a customized comparison of wireless services based on your particular usage patterns.

mobile.yahoo.com

PDA and pager users may never put their gadgets down after signing on to **Yahoo Mobile.** The site sends stock info, weather, and e-mail to your mobile device. Yahoo by Phone ***(phone.yahoo.com)*** lets you listen to your e-mail from any telephone.

thinkmobile.com

News on the go! **Thinkmobile** carries breaking news, an index of products and services, and articles for mobile-device users and developers. Newsletters offer tips for Windows CE, Palm, and Psion devotees.

wirelessadvisor.com

Give your ZIP code to **WirelessAdvisor.com,** and the site goes to work, compiling a list of wireless, cellular, and digital PCS phone companies serving your area. Articles explain the difference between analog and digital service, as well as tell how to choose a wireless plan. Confused? Check the comprehensive glossary of wireless-communications terms.

wow-com.com

Welcome to **The World of Wireless Communications.** Here consumers find tips on picking a phone and service, answers to questions about wireless products and health, and a guide to safe driving while on the phone. If you've wondered how your cell phone and pager work, this site will demystify the magic.

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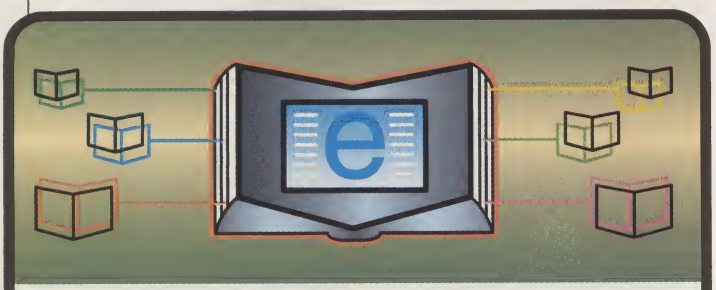
SITE REVIEWS

Request for Quotes marketplace, buying guides, and active community forums.



E-BOOKS

amazon.com/ebooks

The browsing's good at **Amazon.com,** which sells e-books for use on Windows PCs, compatible with Microsoft Reader software. The catalog includes fiction, business, history, sci-fi, even children's books. An e-mail newsletter carries recommendations and info about new titles.

audible.com

For your listening pleasure: **Audible.com** delivers digital "books on tape" that you can listen to on your PC or portable player. Audio programs include best-selling books, *The Wall Street Journal,* and popular magazines.

ebook-gemstar.com

EBook is the place to gather information about the RCA Rocket eBook portable reader. The site is home to featured titles, product and technical-support information, and e-book FAQs.

ebooknet.com

We're on the same page. **EBookNet** is a community for readers of electronic books that includes discussions about e-books and related technologies, an enormous directory of downloadable books, and information about tablet PCs.

ebooks.barnesandnoble.com

Taking a digital turn, **Barnes & Noble** carries e-books in three formats, which can be read online or off. The site's offerings include free and commercial titles, a side-by-side comparison of e-book reader hardware and software, and a helpful newcomer's guide to e-books.

gutenberg.net

Launched in 1971, **Project Gutenberg** is likely the longest-running e-book venture. This free site offers the full text of more than 3,000 public-domain books, articles, and other documents.

ibooks.com

Notable for its technical bent, **ibooks.com** sells more than 1,000 digital books on topics such as programming, databases, and multimedia. The books are in HTML format, and can be read online or printed for offline perusal.

mightywords.com

Casting a fairly wide net, with inventory including business books, technical and health titles, and brand-name fiction, **MightyWords** offers works from major publishers as well as self-published works. The documents require proprietary reader software that is currently available only for Windows.

outpost.com

Free overnight delivery and a 30-day money-back guarantee are among the exceptional customer-service features at **Outpost.com.** The site sells a wide selection of computer hardware and software, personal electronics, and office products.

palmgear.com

Users of handhelds will appreciate the extensive selection of free and commercial programs downloadable from **PalmGear HQ.** Shoppers can buy PDA hardware and accessories, including carrying cases and hip, fashion-forward styli. Sign up for an e-mailing list to receive news, specials, and user tips.

pcconnection.com

PC Connection offers nifty bargains on a colossal variety of PC and Macintosh products. Smart Selectors ease the searching process for shoppers looking for turnkey systems, cameras, printers, monitors, or memory to fit specific guidelines.

pcmall.com

Shoppers at **PC Mall** receive free lifetime technical support on the site's vast selection of computers, hardware, and software. The site's business-solutions forum offers corporate leasing and volume pricing. Apple-heads can find all their favorite Macintosh products at the **Mac Mall** sister site ***(www.macmall.com)***.

pczone.com

PC Zone carries an impressive selection of all things PC. You'll find links to a clearance area and other stores: **Mac Zone** and **Electronics Zone.** Printable rebate coupons can save you some cash.

Provantage

provantage.com

Provantage offers PC products from more than 1,000 manufacturers, including a large selection of books and training materials. The site's Personal Tracking List feature lets customers build a list of product bookmarks, then monitor prices and availability.

qualityclick.com

Flea-market aficionados will love **QualityClick.com,** which offers the unusual ability to "haggle" for selected products. The store covers all the basics for PC users, including hardware, networking supplies, accessories, and software, and offers a build-to-order system configurator.

shopper.cnet.com

The **CNET Shopper** search engine takes the guesswork out of finding a deal on hardware, software, and accessories. The site tracks the prices of more than 200,000 products in 100 stores. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

Shopping Planet

shoppingplanet.com

Do-it-yourselfers will appreciate **Shopping Planet's** inventory of barebones systems, add-on cards, and kits. A section of the site specializing in software and hardware for the Linux operating system is available at ***www.shoppingplanet.com/cm/linux.asp.***

sparco.com

Looking for that something extra? Check out **Sparco.com's** list of products that come bundled with "free stuff." The site stocks more than 130,000 products, and it offers a list of discounted items for students and faculty members of academic institutions.

www.spidergear.com

SpiderGear offers new and refurbished computers, cameras, home audio and video products, and car audio items and appliances. A $10 optional membership entitles you to reduced prices and an annual rebate.

www.ssdonline.com

At **State Street Direct,** shoppers will discover a huge selection of computers and imaging products. Digital-camera

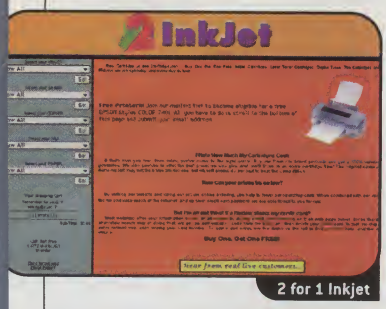
ILLUSTRATION BY HANK OSUNA

SITE REVIEWS

shoppers will find many items of interest, including a gallery for comparing images taken with various cameras.

staples.com

Yeah, they got that. **Staples'** Web site offers a liberal price-matching policy on computer accessories, software, and office supplies. If you order similar items often, you can set up personalized shopping lists. The company can occasionally take its time shipping items out to you, though, so beware.



2 for 1 Inkjet

2for1inkjet.com

Searching for incredible deals on printing supplies? Check out **2 For 1 Inkjet,** which offers two-for-one prices on toner and ink cartridges for every brand of inkjet and laser printer, copier, and fax machine. The company offers free shipping on larger orders.

3re.com

If you can tolerate hand-me-downs to save some bucks, check out **3Re.com,** which repairs and repackages factory-returned computers and electronic equipment. Offerings include desktops, notebooks, printers, monitors, network equipment, and software.

tccomputers.com

In business since 1988, **TC Computers** sells fully configured systems, motherboards, and name-brand peripherals. The company's specialty is motherboards: It tests each one before shipping and bundles a step-by-step installation video.

tcwo.com

Thompson's Computer Warehouse Outlet Center offers only a small selection of computer products. You may find only a dozen monitors or four CD-ROM drives, but the prices are fantastic.

techstore.com

TechStore.com offers hardware in dozens of categories and highlights monthly top sellers. The site also sells a wide range of software—everything from Microsoft productivity suites to children's titles.

thortek.com

A wide array of computer accessories awaits **ThorTek** shoppers. The site provides quick links to the "top 5" products in several categories, including hard drives, monitors, digital cameras, and CD-RW drives.

tigerdirect.com

TigerDirect's site offers 46,000 products, including custom-built computers that are tested and shipped within 48 hours. Up for a little adventure? Order a build-it-yourself custom PC kit, and let the fun begin!

truedataonline.com

True Data Technology stocks an exceptional catalog of motherboards, hard drives, and other upgrades. The site also features communication essentials for businesses, including DSL equipment and telephony products.

www.usbstuff.com

USB Stuff specializes in Universal Serial Bus-equipped gadgets, including digital cameras, CD-RW drives, printers, modems, hubs, and input devices. Uh-oh: Poor site design makes navigation difficult. A sister site at ***www.firewirestuff.com*** stocks IEEE 1394-compatible hardware.

usedcomputer.com

Used Computer Mall is a marketplace for, you guessed it, used computer equipment. Shoppers can list hardware to sell, or look for items to buy using the free classified ads. The site will also help you appraise equipment.

warehouse.com

The four "warehouses" under **MicroWarehouse's** roof sell PC hardware, Mac products, datacomm components, and supplies. The site accepts corporate, educational, and government accounts, and offers business leases on many products.

PC DIRECT VENDORS

buyabs.com

Exceptional customer support on custom-configured desktop and notebook systems is the goal at **ABS Computer Technologies.** All systems include a 30-day money-back guarantee. Some computers are available with Linux preinstalled.

buy-atlas.com

Atlas Micro offers desktop PCs built around Pentium III, Celeron, and AMD processors. Buyers can use drop-down menus to build a custom configuration and are protected by a reasonable 30-day return policy.

compaq.com

Three arms of **Compaq Computer Corp.'s** site offer computers for everyone. See Compaq AtHome ***(athome.compaq.com)*** for home and home-office systems, DirectPlus ***(www.directplus.compaq.com)*** for business PCs and servers, or the Compaq Factory Outlet Superstore ***(compaqfactoryoutlet.com)*** for big bargains. The site allows shoppers to test-drive Compaq systems running various operating systems.

Compaq Computer Corp.

cyberpowerinc.com

Each **CyberPower** PC includes a three-year warranty and 30-day money-back guarantee. The site's service area includes downloadable drivers and lifetime tech support.

dell.com

Dell Computer Corp.'s electronic storefront has always led the way in terms of ease of use. The site is jam-packed with detailed information that makes it a snap to match a machine to your needs. Each system is configurable to the nth degree via drop-down menus, and you can get quick access to online support customized for your PC.

Fosa

www.fosa.com

Fosa's built-to-order notebook computers include a 15-day money-back guarantee with no restocking fee and lifetime technical support. We just wish the site didn't depend so heavily on the Macromedia Flash plug-in. Sheesh!

www.fujitsu-pc.com

Fujitsu's site focuses on portable computing, including notebook PCs and pen-based tablet computers. Each computer includes several warranty options. The site's Refurbished Outlet peddles money-saving deals.

SITE REVIEWS

gateway.com

One of the biggest players in online computer sales, **Gateway's** enormous and informative site sells custom-built desktops and portables, delivering them on time 98 percent of the time, according to BizRate.com.

hpshopping.com

At this site, **Hewlett-Packard Co.** sells its lines of desktop and notebook computers, handhelds, PDAs, digital cameras, and printers. Business leases are available, and the site makes repeat purchases easy for businesses and individuals.

ibm.com/shop

ShopIBM sells business and home computers, notebooks, servers, thin clients, networking equipment, and peripherals. The build-to-order option allows buyers to customize a new desktop PC. Linux is an option on laptop models.

idot.com

From low-cost budget models to powerful monster machines, **iDot** offers customized desktop and notebook computers with a good return policy. The iForum area includes tech articles and Q&A lists of interest to PC shoppers.

kaypro.com

You can design your own Pentium III desktop system at **Kaypro,** but the custom configurator doesn't offer as much flexibility as we'd like. The site's notebook area carries a selection of Fujitsu portables.

microexpress.net

Micro Express offers built-to-order desktop and notebook computers featuring AMD and Intel processors. Each system includes a 30-day guarantee and a two- or four-year warranty. Business leases are available.

micronpc.com

One of the largest direct PC vendors, **micronpc.com** sells computers to home-office users, larger businesses, government buyers, and buyers outside the United States. The Factory Outlet offers refurbished and discontinued systems.

nutrend.com

Custom-configure a home or business desktop PC at **NuTrend Computer Products.** The company stocks a wide selection of machines running your choice of Intel or AMD processors. Each system comes with a three-year warranty.

sagernotebook.com

Specializing in notebook computers, **Sager** offers a variety of options, from budget machines to speedy multimedia units. Service includes a 72-hour repair-turnaround guarantee and lifetime free tech support. Business leases are available.

shopprostar.com

Each computer in **ProStar Computer's** line of notebook PCs is backed by a 30-day money-back guarantee, a speedy-repair promise, and free tech support. The handy comparison tool helps buyers zero in on the best model for their needs.

sonystyle.com

SonyStyle sells Sony's line of VAIO desktops and notebooks, plus digital cameras, displays, and storage devices. The Xtras Direct section of the site carries add-ons for PCs, digital cameras, and other equipment.

store.apple.com

Apple Computer's online store looks just like an iMac, all shiny and clean. This well-designed site allows you to custom-configure any Macintosh computer and offers a wide array of Mac-compatible software and accessories. Beware the one-click ordering feature, however—using it may be a bit too convenient for impulse buyers!

tiny.com

Britain's favorite direct computer seller is now targeting us Yanks. **Tiny Computers'** line of prebuilt desktop and notebook PCs includes models for professionals and first-time buyers.

unitedmicro.com

United Micro offers a unique degree of configurability with its desktop and server PCs. Choosy shoppers can, for instance, pick the motherboard model and brand of cooling fan. You can see pictures of each component before you build the system.

www.winbook.com

Focusing exclusively on portables, **WinBook Computer Corp.** offers machines with a 30-day money-back guarantee, a one-year warranty, and free technical support. Ironically, some of the site's best deals, the daily "Web specials," can only be ordered by phone.

windrover.com

Windrover serves up a 30-day return policy and three-year warranty for all of its prebuilt and custom-configured laptops. Optional extended warranties include express service and 24/7 technical support.

PC RESOURCES

cablemodeminfo.com

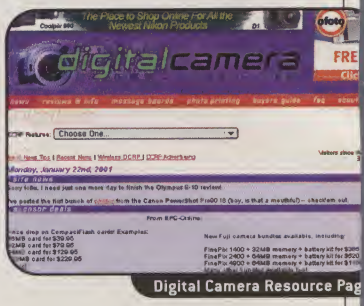
CableModemInfo.com serves up reviews of cable-modem and DSL hardware, plus tips on sharing a modem between PCs. The site can help you find a cable-ready ISP in your area.

consumersearch.com

ConsumerSearch collects abstracts of reviews for all sorts of products, including computers, appliances, sports equipment, and automobiles. Each abstract includes a citation (for magazine articles) or a link (for online reviews).

dailyedeals.com

DailyeDeals' coupon pages offer codes that will instantly shave $5 to $40 off the bottom line at major online retailers. The First Time area links to substantial discounts for first-time customers.



dcresource.com

The **Digital Camera Resource Page** is an unbiased, comprehensive source of information for digital-camera buyers and owners. Shoppers can glean necessary info from the FAQ page, buyer's guide, message boards, and reviews.

dealtime.com

DealTime.com is an independent comparison-shopping service. The site aggregates prices from hundreds of online merchants, auctions, and classified sites. Also, 21st-century shoppers can compare prices by cell phone or wireless PDA, thanks to the site's mobile service.

www.epubliceye.com

Watchdog **ePublicEye.com** serves up a rating site that helps shoppers choose online businesses that deliver the best customer service. Available in six languages, the site employs "secret shoppers" who patronize Internet businesses, conducting audits and rating the service of each.

expertcity.com

Expertcity.com promises live, 24-hour computer assistance from real human beings. When you pose a question, experts across the Internet bid for your business. Read their profiles, compare prices, then choose the expert you like.

SITE REVIEWS

56k.com

See **56K.com** for a primer on 56Kbps modems, a price shopper for buying a modem at the best price, and downloads of the latest firmware. Read the buyer's guide and upgrade FAQ before buying a new modem.

www.ftc.gov

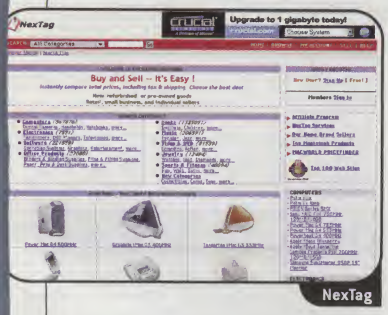
The **Federal Trade Commission's** Web site is packed with useful information about consumer fraud and how to avoid it—online and off. Articles address online auctions and how to protect yourself when shopping on the Net.

gomez.com

Gómez.com offers ratings and customer reviews of e-commerce sites in two dozen categories, ranging from Web-based computer stores to drugstores, apparel vendors to online brokers. Check the ratings on ease of use, customer confidence, and cost.

motherboards.org

Motherboard HomeWorld is packed with motherboard news, reviews, specifications, and tips. Its comprehensive database of 1,200 products includes driver information, technical details, and overclocking hints.



nextag.com

NexTag is a sophisticated buying service that can help frugal shoppers find the lowest possible prices on computer equipment, electronics, books, music, and videos. Entering your ZIP code allows NexTag to calculate shipping and tax for accurate pricing.

pdastreet.com

PDAStreet.com, a resource for users of Palm, Windows CE, Psion, and Visor personal digital assistants, offers message boards, software downloads, news, and product reviews.

pricepda.com

PricePDA.com is a price-comparison engine for buyers of personal digital assistants, accessories, and software. Users can access the site anywhere via WAP-enabled cell phones.

rammatters.com

RAM Matters humorously explains how adding memory to your computer will make you more productive. You'll get help in determining the type of memory your computer requires, as well as installation tips.

scambusters.com

Busted! **Internet ScamBusters** is a site and newsletter aiming to help Net users avoid getting cheated. Each newsletter focuses on the latest scams to make the rounds.

usb.org

Check **USB.org** for technical information about the Universal Serial Bus, as well as answers to frequently asked questions and information about devices that use it. You'll find information for end users as well as developers.

windrivers.com

WinDrivers.com is a comprehensive archive of drivers and DLL files for hard drives, sound cards, scanners, and other hardware. The site also provides links to antivirus updates and BIOS upgrades.

www.worldowindows.com

World O'Windows is a collection of news, resources, and tips about current and future versions of Microsoft Windows. The site can be invaluable if you're considering upgrading or if your recent upgrade is causing problems.

SOFTWARE SITES

accountingshop.com

The **Accounting Shop** focuses on accounting software. Shoppers can choose from an extensive catalog of high-end, midrange, and small-business packages, and get rebates when upgrading from QuickBooks or Peachtree software.

atomicpark.com

AtomicPark.com specializes in business software, offering free shipping on all orders. Specialized product categories include voice-recognition software and fax applications.

beyond.com

Beyond.com presents software for PC, Mac, and PDA users. In addition to traditional boxed titles, the site sells downloadable software from major publishers and a respectable selection of computer hardware. (CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company, is an investor in Beyond.com.)

TRAVEL SITES

all-hotels.com

Whether you're looking for a cozy B&B or just an inexpensive place to rest your head, **All-Hotels** can help. This directory of 60,000 online-bookable hotels has detailed information about each and photos of many.

egulliver.com

In need of a luxury cruise or an international holiday? Not every trip is simple enough to book yourself. To get you where you want to go, **eGulliver.com** links customers with "specialists"—travel agents with expertise in the type of trip you want to take.

expedia.com

At **Expedia,** travelers can book flights, hotel rooms, cars, vacation packages, and cruises. The FareTracker tool keeps tabs on price changes and sends e-mail alerts accordingly.

hotwire.com

Traveling on a budget? **Hotwire** promises deep discounts on airline tickets—if you're flexible. You pick the dates of travel and see the price up front, but you won't know the airline or flight times until after you make your purchase. You can get a great deal, though you won't earn frequent-flyer miles.

revelex.com

Revelex.com will sell you airline tickets to your desired destination and help you find something wonderful to do while you're there. "Destination guides" house information about attractions in, and the history of, U.S. and international cities. You can also book a hotel room and reserve a rental car.

travelite.org

The **Travelite FAQ** has lots of tips on traveling light. Give in to your wanderlust with just a carry-on bag and without the worry of losing checked bags. This site reviews luggage, gives wardrobe selection tips, explains electrical adapters, and more.

travelocity.com

Travelocity.com offers something for everyone, from business travelers to cruise aficionados. Check the Fare Watcher to keep abreast of changing airfares, then use the Vacation Finder *to discover the perfect getaway.*

ILLUSTRATION BY HANK OSUNA

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 166

SITE REVIEWS

buycheapsoftware.com

The name sums it up. **Buy Cheap Software** offers a relatively small selection—about 300 titles—at deep discounts. The site does sell programs from well-known publishers, including Adobe, Corel, Lotus, and Microsoft.

buyonet.com

Buyonet specializes in downloadable commercial software. Hundreds of business applications, utilities, and games are available for download. For a nominal fee, shoppers can order a CD backup of purchased titles.

ONLINE BANKING SITES

claritybank.com

Claritybank.com's Web site looks more like MTV than the stodgy financial channel. Although the interest rate on checking accounts is a bit low (3.56 percent APY) the site offers plenty of personalization features, including custom e-mail alerts and the choice of online or paper statements.

compubank.com

CompuBank may win the award for least creative name, but its features—including free wire transfers and the ability to view canceled checks online—are more innovative. Its free interest-bearing checking account earns 4.07 percent (APY).

directbanking.com

Directbanking.com is a rarity: an Internet bank that's establishing a brick-and-mortar presence. The interest rate on its free checking account is 4 percent (APY). Need cash on the go? Use your Palm handheld to find the nearest ATM.

everbank.com

Everbank.com customers get free online-banking services complete with interest-bearing checking accounts (with a high 6.01 percent APY), and a Web bill-pay feature. The company refunds other banks' ATM fees, up to $6 per month.

firstib.com

The **First Internet Bank of—Indiana**? Yes, the Hoosier State is home to 5 percent (APY) checking accounts, online customer-service chat, and ATM-fee rebates of $6 per month. A demo lets you try the online-banking features before you sign up.

virtualbank.com

VirtualBank's FDIC-insured checking accounts earn an impressive 6.25 percent (APY). The company refunds from $6 to $25 in ATM fees each month, depending on the balance in your accounts. The bank stresses its privacy policies and does not sell customers' information to other lenders.

wingspanbank.com

A savings account at **WingspanBank.com** earns 6.5 percent (APY), allows for free deposits at 30,000 ATMs, and gives you free access to TurboTax for the Web. An E-Bill service lets you view bills online before paying them.

chumbo.com

In addition to tons of Windows, PDA, and Mac programs, **Chumbo.com** features a Linux Store that sells applications for the popular alternative OS. You'll also find an array of DVD movies here.

cws.internet.com

Stroud's Consummate Winsock Applications List is the ultimate one-stop download site for Internet software, including Web-development tools, browsers, and chat clients. You'll find comprehensive file lists, ratings, and extensive reviews. A free newsletter provides summaries of new software releases.

download.cnet.com

CNET Download.com will help you find shareware and free software, linking to tens of thousands of PC, Mac, Linux, and PDA titles. Well-written newsletters and down-to-earth reviews help you to locate the perfect program. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

ebworld.com

The online arm of the ubiquitous Electronics Boutique stores, **EBWorld.com** is a video-game player's paradise, offering 3,000 products. Its home page highlights new releases, coming-soon titles, and top sellers.

freewarefiles.com

Windows users who want software without having to spend any money can start at **Freeware Files.com.** This site features quick links to the most popular giveaways.

jumbo.com

Jumbo is the perfect name for this monstrous file archive, which features programs for sale, commercial-application demos, shareware, and freeware. Jumbo Guides offer articles on backing up, sharing MP3s, and other computing topics.

mightyscholar.com

Mighty Scholar Corp. sells hand-picked educational software, categorized by age range and subject.

999central.com

The price is right at **999central.com,** which stocks 500 software and 200 DVD titles, most for $9.99. Educational, entertainment, and lifestyle applications are the most common. The site offers an ongoing "buy seven, get one free" deal.

www.pdfstore.com

The **PDF Store** specializes in software for creating and working with Portable Document Format files, carrying a convenient, focused selection. The site sells shareware and commercial software for immediate download.

soft4u.com

Soft4U.com specializes in software for businesses, resellers, schools, and government offices. The company offers same-day shipping on most software and highlights two daily specials at wholesale cost.

softwarebuyline.com

Software BuyLine has a massive selection of software titles for Windows, Mac OS, Windows CE, and Palm OS. Shipping is free for orders of $50 or more. You'll also get easy access to product-rebate information.

www.tucows.com

It's not just bovine bliss: **Tucows** is also an incredible archive of freeware and shareware. Plenty of local mirror sites keep downloads speedy. The category list and reviews make finding the software you seek a breeze.

zdnet.com/downloads

Dude, you'll need more bandwidth. Download shareware, freeware, and demos from **ZDNet Downloads.** The site offers daily software highlights and quick links to the week's most popular software. Every program is rated, reviewed, and checked for viruses, so your new software won't come with any unpleasant surprises. (ZDNet is owned by CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company.) ▼

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